

KGA Kent Governors' Association



**Minutes of the KGA County Governors Meeting
13 March 2017 at 19.00 hrs
Held in John Wigan Room, Oakwood House, Oakwood Park
Maidstone ME16 8AE**

Welcome and Chairman's Report

The Interim Chairman, Jack Keeler, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that the former Chair, Mrs Deborah Bruce, would continue to be on the Executive Board as a representative for Tunbridge Wells and would remain the lead to link with the National Governors Association (NGA) at a national level. Jack thanked Deborah for her work whilst Chair and her continued support.

Patrick Leeson, Sally Lees and Simon Pleace would be presenting to governors during the meeting.

➤ **Half Year Update**

Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education and Young People's Services

Patrick Leeson introduced himself to governors and thanked Deborah Bruce for her time spent as Chair of the KGA. The Governor Magazine had now been published and had been sent to all schools.

Patrick Leeson went through his presentation for the benefit of governors covering the following areas:

Key priorities and service developments

- EYPS Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-2020
- Education Services Company
- Children's and Young People's Services Improvement Programme
- SEN Strategy Refresh
- NEETs and 14-19 Strategy
- Early Help Strategy and Three Year Plan
- Education Commissioning Plan Update

2016 was the first year that Kent had been above the National Average in every Key Stage. It was a milestone and would not be lost going forward. The quality of schools in Kent continued to improve and there were currently 91% (nearer 92%) of schools that were either good or outstanding. Parents had more choice of schools and children had a greater experience of the curriculum on a day to day basis. 22% of schools in Kent were outstanding that that was slightly over the national average.

Kent had a record of continuous improvement as there had been a focussed approach to school improvement and had worked in partnership with schools to ensure that they collaborated and were in partnerships. The improvement journey had helped teachers to share their good practice with other schools collaboratively.

Kent still had many young people that dropped out of education at 17 years of age. The NEET figures in Kent had dropped significantly during the last few months to around 2.9%. Every school was responsible for the destination of their young people.

Early Help had received a lot of support over the past two or three years and it was important to ensure that schools made use of the service. A lot of investment had been put in to provide extra services.

Pupil numbers continued to increase and 10,000 – 11,000 extra school places had been added across Kent. Kent would also be adding an extra 80 forms of entry (around 25,000 additional places) during the next four years. The county was in a growth phase which would continue into the early 2020's. Primary places would continue to expand.

- **Education Services Company**

Our objectives

- To increase the long-term sustainability of education services in Kent
- To maintain and enhance strong bonds between KCC and Kent schools, allowing schools to have a greater say in how services operate and continuing the focus on improving attainment and standards
- To realise the additional opportunities for growth and future investment in traded Educational Services to better support the delivery of high-quality statutory services.

It was important to put Headteachers in the driving position to know what was needed for Kent and the KAH (Kent Association of Headteachers) would be driving that aspect.

- **Education Services Company Scope**

- It is proposed that the Education Services Company will be a community interest company – intended for companies that wish to use assets and profits for community benefit rather than for increase in shareholder wealth
- The Education Services Company would be responsible for delivering directly several services that were currently delivered from KCC and would continue to act as an access point for other KCC provided services

- **Services in SCOPE**

IN the new Company	Remaining in KCC
School Improvement incl. Governor Services	Early Help & Preventative Services
Outdoor Education	SEN
Schools Financial Services	Fair Access, Admissions
Early Years and Childcare	Area Education Officers
Education Psychology	Provision, Planning and Operations
Skills and Employability	Academies Conversion
Education Safeguarding Service	Community Learning and Skills
Edukent – marketing and billing	

There would be no splitting of services – statutory and traded elements would remain together. There would be strong alignment across all services.

- **Governance**

The proposal had school involvement on both the Education Services Company and KCC side. A structure outline was shown.

- **Timeline and Next Steps**

- Business case was currently moving through the approvals process with final decision to take place on 27 March 2017
- Development of detailed implementation had started
- Plans were underway to set up the Company board and stakeholder and commissioning board from April to support implementation and be ready for the company going live later in the year.

The following questions were raised:

Would governors have representation? Yes, governor representation would be reflected through the KAH.

What was in it for the Governing Boards and Kent Schools? Schools had an interest in education and there was an interest in continuing to have services that could be delivered to schools.

Why did Kent have to create a trading company? That is what Kent had to do. Some school would want to look for alternative providers, there was a growing market and some of the schools would prefer to do business with Kent as they valued what Kent had achieved. There was also an element of trust and reliability in remaining with the Local Authority.

Should schools inform the LA of the kind of services that they wanted? There would be a more proactive business relationship between the Education Services Company and schools.

- **LA Multi Academy Trust Proposal**

Patrick Leeson explained that the La was developing a type of La Multi Academy Trust proposal. Schools in Kent were in a very strong position and the schools that were 'outstanding' would not be forced to become an academy. The only compulsion was when a school had been judged as Category 4. It was now law that Regional Schools Commissioners could arrange for a school to be sponsored by a MAT. The issue for Kent was whether the notion of MATs made sense and what the schools gained from joining a MAT.

- **National Picture**

- Education Select Committee Report 28 February 2017
- MPs urged the government to allow local authorities with a strong track record in education to set up their own MATs
- Echoed councils' calls to be allowed to use their expertise to help boost performance in struggling academies
- Number of MATS in England has trebled from 391 in 2011 to 1,121 in 2016
- Concerns about the performance of some MATS, and capacity of the Department for Education (DfE), and the Education Funding Agency
- Concern about small rural schools and 'untouchable' schools with poor records that find it hard to attract a strong sponsor
- The Department for Education said that there was no legal framework to allow councils to run MATs as fewer than 20% of members and trustees are allowed to be 'local authority influenced'.
- KCC had proposed that the 19.9% cap on the involvement of Local Authorities in MATs should be lifted

- **Current Academy Landscape in Kent**

There are 581 schools in Kent, including 99 Secondary Schools, 452 Primary Schools and 23 Special Schools

Of these, 212 schools (36%) are academies, including 137 Primary, 74 Secondary and 1 Special School

A further 369 schools (64%) are KCC maintained schools, including 315 Primary, 25 Secondary and 21 Special Schools

Of these 369 maintained schools, 89 are Voluntary Controlled (24%) and 54 are Voluntary Aided (15%) schools making 143 in total and representing 39% of all maintained schools

- **MAT Landscape in Kent Chart**

Multi Academy Trusts		
	MATS	Schools
National/Regional MATs with 1 Academy in Kent	8	8
MATS with 2 Academy schools in Kent	14	28
MATs with 3 Academy schools in Kent	5	15
MATs with 4 Academy schools in Kent	4	16
MATS with 5 to 9 Academy schools in Kent	5	38
MATs with 10+ Academy schools in Kent	3	44

Total MATs	39	141
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Most MATs in Kent were small and had developed in different ways. MATs should have flexibility, financial liability, leadership, middle leadership and strong governance at a Trust level. A small MAT to be viable should have 8 – 10 schools, a Medium 12 – 15 schools and larger at least 15 schools. Kent was not at a stage to have large MATs at the current time.

- **Feedback from Schools**

- Schools considering academy status recognise the DfE preference for developing or becoming part of a multi-academy trust
- Some schools have expressed a desire for an alternative either to forming their own MAT or joining an existing MAT whose ethos they do not share
- At the same time, a significant number of Church schools in Kent have the governance option of becoming part of a church majority MAT
- Some Community and Foundation schools do not wish to join these arrangements because of the governance structures that accompany such a MAT

- **KCC Response**

- The Local Authority had responded to those concerns through exploration of the idea of developing Local Authority supported MATs which could provide the means for a proportion of remaining maintained schools, particularly those which are small, geographically isolated or vulnerable for a variety of other reasons, to become part of a MAT that has the formal involvement of the Local Authority.
- The Local Authority has a track record of improvement and working collaboratively, and would help to further develop leadership capacity and values-led and evidence-led educational direction and practice.

- **KCC Guiding Principles**

- Partnership and joint collaborative working between schools and with the local authority is critical for success
- A school led system needs to operate with coherence and alignment to other key services in the system that support school improvement and support vulnerable learners.
- All schools have an interest in, and should be able to influence, the quality, effectiveness and performance of local services and systems that support education and contribute to improving outcomes for children and young people
- Schools should be part of the leadership governance and ownership of our strategies, services and plans for education.

- **KCC Proposed Model**

- KCC would become a DfE approved sponsor so that the MAT could take on schools in difficulty and promote new Free Schools
- Aim to pilot 4 Primary area based hubs with the option of a fifth Secondary phase hub that could operate county wide
- Maximum autonomy for schools balanced with the MAT's ultimate accountability for individual school performance
- Recognition that every school has its own unique context and how the MAT works with its schools will be detailed on an individual basis which takes account of this.
- Retention of Local Governing Boards within a delegated governance structure, granting maximum freedom to schools
- Transparency on centrally provided services and their cost to schools
- The MAT would encourage its schools to always explore ways of supporting others within the educational community.

Kent was looking to pilot 4 groups of schools, one in each of the 4 different areas of the county. It was not about trying to take over the agenda and the LA was conscious of whether schools wanted it to happen and that some schools could be left out. Some schools were not attractive to be members of MATs i.e. budget issues and requiring extra support.

- **High Needs Funding**

- High Needs Funding was introduced in 2015 and considerable amounts of extra funding has been added to it. Most schools access it in some way
- High growth in High Needs pupil numbers will continue
- Unlikely to see any increase in High Needs funding in Kent for the next 4 years
- Since 2013 – 2014 an increase of £14M to support High Needs costs in mainstream schools
- Just under half of High Needs funded pupils do not have an EHCP
- Referrals for statutory assessment continues to increase
- A review of High Needs funding has been commenced

- **Review of High Needs Funding**

In partnership with schools we want to look at practice and provision where:

- There are more than 10 applications for high needs funding (will vary depending on size of school)
- Applications include a majority of 1:1 provision
- Any HNF application that is over the Special School cost for that need type
- There is evidence of poor quality provision plans, poor outcomes or limited evidence of 'assess, plan, do, review cycle'.
- Lack of evidence of impact and/or progress at reapplication
- Limited use of the LIFT process and the available support to increase capacity in the school.

The Interim Chair thanked Patrick Leeson for his presentation to governors.

➤ **Kent Association of Headteachers (KAH)**

Sally Lees, Chair of the Kent Association of Headteachers

The Chair introduced Sally Lees to the meeting. She explained that she was the Chair of the KAH (Kent Association of Headteachers) and also the Principal of Homewood School and Sixth Form College. The KAH existed to ensure that every school in Kent was part of the KAH and all Headteachers were also members. It enabled everyone to build on the collaborative spirit.

- **Aim**

To establish a school-led sustainable self-improving system in Kent, through a strategic partnership between all schools, the local authority and other partners.

- **Objectives**

- To support school-led continuous improvement of performance
- To increase leadership capacity in the County's schools
- To promote partnerships and networks that support school-led improvement
- To act as the voice of Kent Headteachers

The KAH worked closely with the Kent and Medway Teaching Partnerships and with the LA. A newsletter had been produced with a survey asking Headteachers to comment on the Funding Forum Survey which was out for consultation at the present time. The KAH had received around 200 responses and would the feedback together and make a response on behalf of Kent schools.

- **Reflections on Success**

- Impact of the focus on supporting collaborations in school-to-school support
- Impact of the focus on supporting school improvement
- Appointing and training Kent Leaders of education
- Acting as the voice for Kent schools on a range of key issues
- Guiding the development and implementation of the Kent Leadership Strategy

In 2014 – 2015 522 schools out of 580 schools had been involved in collaborative projects funded by the KAH. The impact in terms of Ofsted and student outcomes was very positive. The KAH appointed about 60 KLEs that had been trained and focussed on peer support, mentoring new Headteachers and school improvement.

David Hills, from the KGA, had been working with the KAH as the voice of governors identifying strands where governance was part of the strategy. There was a need to consider how both parties could develop training and leadership for Kent schools and governors.

- **Priorities for 2016-2017**

- Priority 1: To improve outcomes in Ofsted Inspections
- Priority 2: To raise achievement and narrow gaps
- Priority 3: To increase leadership capacity www.kentleaders.org.uk
- Priority 4: To support the development of formal and sustainable partnerships between schools
- Priority 5: To continue the strategic development of the KAH

A handout entitled 'Kent Leaders in Leadership' had been placed on tables for governors to review.

Sally Lees asked governors to encourage their Headteachers to make contact with their local representative and Chair of the KAH as that was the way to get representation around the new education services. Each area would have an Area Board with an area Chair.

- **Communication**

- Information about the KAH can be found on the KELSIs website on this link: <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/kent-association-of-headteachers>
- A KAH website is in the process of development
- A regular KAH newsletter is sent to Headteachers

Questions for discussion:

- **The Kent education system is increasingly diverse. Does that change the role of Kent-wide organisations such as KAH and KGA?** Both organisations needed to link more together and Sally Lees felt that the KLE Conference would be the forum for the KGA to link into the KAH with local leaders of governance making contact with local Headteachers. A speaker had been booked for the event who was Head of the Teaching Schools Council and would also be doing some small group discussion work. Sally Lees explained that the KAH would be happy to extend an invitation to the KGA to attend the Conference. It was felt that the two organisations should remain separate as they would have wider coverage. As more and more MATs formed, five years down the line, leaders from both organisations would be in the MATS. The KAH had different types of school representatives.
- **Local Leaders of governance to be communicators at their local level.** The role of the LLG alongside local leaders of education would need some thought. NLGs were part of that role. KLE's worked directly alongside the LA with schools that were in difficulty. The larger part of their work was long term i.e. leadership and collaboration. The Chair made the comment that as far as the Executive was concerned, the District Meetings were becoming well attended and fed information back to their schools.

The Interim Chair thanked Sally Lees for her presentation to governors.

➤ **Fairer Funding**

Simon Pleace (Revenue & Finance Manager, KCC)

Schools National Funding Formula Government Consultation – Stage 2

Simon Pleace introduced himself to governors and went through the presentation for the benefit of governors.

There are some active campaigns where the point is being made that the funding for schools was inadequate.

- **What is changing**

- Current funding system was unfair and not transparent
- Kent has traditionally been one of the lower funded LA members of f40
- DSG historically based = schools block + high needs = early years
- DfE were proposing to introduce a fairer National Funding Formula for schools
- Proposals also covered High Needs and central services for schools

- **Steps so far**

- Flat cash funding introduced in April 200
- Mainstreaming of specific grants
- School Funding Reforms of 2013
- £390M injection of additional funding in 2015
- Spring 2016 – Stage 1 consultation
- July 2016 – Stage 1 consultation
- July 2016 – New SofS for Education
- December 2016 – Stage 2 launched

Headlines from the Proposals

- In total, Kent schools are set to gain £29.5m (+3.6%) when the NFF is fully implemented
- Some of our schools are gaining 10% +
- But 140+ schools are set to lose
- Lack of flexibility to move DSG between blocks in future
- National rates are based on current spending averages rather than an evidenced/needs led basis
- A new floor to limit the reduction to -3% per pupil (stability)
- Some schools therefore protected on historic funding levels for many years
- No reduction to our high Needs funding but also no increase for a few years
- Central services for schools block set to reduce by £570K or 8.2%

Schools block how will it work

- 2017 – 2018 = no change to methodology
 - Funding given to LAs
 - LAs operate local formula
 - LA can move funding between blocks (with Forum permission)
- 2018 – 2019 = Soft NFF
 - LA total is aggregate of NFF for each school
 - Schools who gain – capped at 3%
 - Schools due to lose – MFG -1.5%
 - LA operates local formula

Schools block how will it work

- 2018 – 2019 = Soft NFF continued
 - Greater restrictions on moving funding between blocks
- 19 – 20 = Hard NFF
 - EFA operates national formula
 - Schools who gain – capped at 2.5%
 - Schools who lose – MFG – 1.5% and Floor -3%
 - 100% of schools block goes to schools
 - No LA discretion
 - Forum role to be confirmed

Constructions of the Schools NFF

In total there will be 13 factors in the NFF

Figure 1: The building blocks and factors in the national funding formula for schools

Schools Block NFF Weightings

DfE are proposing to increase the amount of funding provided for additional pupil need (e.g. deprivation and low prior attainment) – targeting children from families who are just about managing.

	Kent	NFF
Basic per pupil funding	78.5%	72.5%
Additional pupil need	11.1%	18.1%
School led funding	10.4%	9.4%

Winners and Losers in Kent - % movement

Slide showing schools who win and lose in primary and secondary

Schools Block NFF Impact for Kent Schools and Academies

Generally speaking...

- Schools in deprived areas gain
- Schools who have high numbers of pupils with lower prior attainment gain
- Secondary non-selective schools gain
- Secondary selective schools do not gain
- Small primary schools lose

District based illustration tool shown on screen which showed what the impact of the funding would be. The LA would compare the 2016-2017 school budget to the national funding form budget when it was complete.

Governors asked the following questions:

A governor asked how Pupil Premium would fit in with the new funding? Pupil Premium was not included with the new funding and would be kept separate until at least 2019.

How would teacher's salary increases be funded? The Unions had joined forces and have said that 98% of schools would lose out. Whether the government would do anything remained to be seen. The more that people issued concern then the Government would have to listen. The apprenticeship Levy was a separate issue.

High Needs

- High Needs block will in future be calculated using a NFF
- A high % of the formula is current spend
- Kent does not gain any additional funding
- But thankfully we don't lose any either
- Bigger concern is future years – no growth increase
- Budget will be under pressure – reduce costs?

Next steps

- Raising profile of consultation with schools
- Continue to work closely with f40
- Consultation closes on 22 March but we are keen to get an early response submitted
- Government response expected Summer 2017

John Dennis urged governors to ask their schools to respond to the Consultation.

Governors raised the following questions:

A governor asked if any reference had been made to capital funding? Simon Pleave explained that no mention had been made of that and it was still proposed to continue at the very low rate as at present. That would probably go on indefinitely as there had been no indication that it would either end or increase.

By how much would individual schools be affected by the new funding arrangements? New schools had been excluded from the illustration but the principles of the NFF would apply to them as it would to academies.

The Interim Chair thanked Simon Pleave for his presentation to governors.

➤ **Feedback to on Workshop Responses (Assembly Meeting 17 October 2017)**

The Interim Chair went through the Workshop Responses for the benefit of governors, a copy would be filed with the Minutes on Kelsi in due course.

What aspects of the KGA are valued

- KGA Assemblies ***
- Information about current situation
- Information about KCC Strategy **
- KCC information at Assemblies
- Bridge between different types of school – maintained/Free/Academies
- Facilitation of dialogue between KCC and Schools
- Opportunity to network with other governors
- Chance to meet RSC
- Talks about Early Help, Virtual School
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What should the KGA improve

- More sharing of best practice, including from outside LA *
- Closer links with KAH *
- More dialogue with KCC *
- Engage with more governing bodies
- Assess the location of Assemblies and consider moving around
- Improved marketing of KGA information *** (What do we do?)
- Marketing and use of NGA organisation and information – Governors want to see more
- Improved signposting to external resources e.g. BTec course in clerking, Safer Recruitment Course *
- Help governors to network
- Improve electronic communication *
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What else should the KGA do in future

- Stronger voice for Kent on NGA**
- Stronger link to NGA *
- Keep finger on the pulse
- Governor mentors
- Influence government policy and funding
- Quality assure training courses
- Newsletter

How much would you be prepared to pay for KGA

- Considered payment of £100 per school reasonable
- Banded fees for different types of school/school size

What KCC Services are used and valued

- District Briefings **
- Termly Update
- Governor Training *****
- KELSIS
- School Personnel Service **
- Schools Financial Services
- School Legal Services
- School Improvement Services
- Model Policies
- The Governor Magazine
- Property/Projects support

What needs to be improved

- More dialogue with KGA

- Quality, quantity and consistency of training ***
- Organisation of KELSI and ease of access to governor briefing/training documents/presentations/all governor documents
- Improved search engine on KELSI
- Greater interaction enabled during training
- Services to clerks so that they feel valued and provide a better service to GBs
- Electronic communication
- Faster response to queries
- Quality of Clerking Service
- Sharing of best practice

What new services should be developed

- Greater variety of subjects in the live training programme
- More online training *
- More opportunities for face to face networking
- Easy to read Governors Handbook with good indexing and executive summary
- Governor recruitment
- Support and guidance for Governors' role in Teaching and Learning

*The additional asterisks indicate multiple responses on the same point

The Interim Chair thanked Suzanne Mayes and her administration staff for organising the KGA meetings. The KGA was looking at possibly holding the meetings in other areas of the County to facilitate all governors.

Lastly, the Interim Chair confirmed that Mrs Janice Brooke would be assuming the role of Chair of the KGA as from September 2017.

The date of the next KGA Assembly meeting would be Monday 12 June 2017 at 19.00 hrs at Oakwood House, Maidstone.

The meeting closed at 21.00 hrs